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MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

BOSTON, Mass.

1870-1920



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MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

BOSTON

1870-1920





Gift

FROM THE ACT OF INCORPORATION, FEBRUARY 4, 1870

Section 1. MARTIN BRIMMER, CHARLES C. PERKINS, CHARLES W. ELIOT, WILLIAM ENDICOTT, Jr., SAMUEL ELIOT, FRANCIS E. PARKER, HENRY P. KIDDER, WILLIAM B. ROGERS, GEORGE B. EMERSON, OTIS NORCROSS, JOHN T. BRADLEE, and BENJAMIN S. ROTCH, together with three persons to be annually appointed by the President and Fellows of Harvard College, with the consent of the Board of Overseers, three persons to be annually appointed by the Trustees of the Boston Athenaeum, and three persons to be annually appointed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, if the said corporations shall make such appointments, and the Mayor of the City of Boston, the President of the Trustees of the Public Library, and the Superintendent of Public Schools of said city, the Secretary of the Board of Education, and the Trustee of the Lowell Institute, *ex officio*, are hereby made a body corporate, by the name of the Trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts for the purpose of erecting a Museum for the preservation and exhibition of works of art, of making, maintaining and exhibiting collections of such works, and of affording instruction in the Fine Arts, with all the powers and privileges, and subject to all the duties, liabilities, and restrictions set forth in Chapter sixty-eight of the General Statutes, and acts in addition thereto.

TRUSTEES OF THE MUSEUM 1920

HOLKER ABBOTT	MORRIS GRAY
THOMAS ALLEN	AUGUSTUS HEMENWAY
HENRY FORBES BIGELOW	EDWARD JACKSON HOLMES
WILLIAM STURGIS BIGELOW	ALEXANDER WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW
CHARLES KNOWLES BOLTON	ABBOTT LAWRENCE LOWELL
GEORGE HENRY CHASE	ALEXANDER MANN
JOHN TEMPLEMAN COOLIDGE	ANDREW JAMES PETERS
JOSEPH RANDOLPH COOLIDGE, Jr.	DUDLEY LEAVITT PICKMAN
CHARLES WILLIAM ELIOT	DENMAN WALDO ROSS
WILLIAM ENDICOTT	CHARLES SPRAGUE SARGENT
WILLIAM CROWNINSHIELD ENDICOTT	HENRY LEE SHATTUCK
DESMOND FITZGERALD	PAYSON SMITH
EDWARD WALDO FORBES	ELIHU THOMSON
GEORGE PEABODY GARDNER	FRANK VICTOR THOMPSON
GEORGE ROBERT WHITE	

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

BOSTON.

1870—1920



HUNTINGTON AVENUE ENTRANCE

71. *Qu. Whether Pictures and Statues are not in fact so much Treasure? And whether Rome and Florence would not be poor Towns without them?*

Bishop BERKELEY,
"The Querist," 1735.

THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS in Boston occupies a unique position among the greater museums of the country, and perhaps of the world, in that it was created and has been supported to this day solely by private citizens; and not a few only, but thousands and even tens of thousands. It remains for the citizenship of the present to acknowledge the unusual honor of this burden by continuing to bear it in a way to do credit to its brilliant past.

Funds

The first to be named in the long and distinguished line of those who have joined in making the Museum of Fine Arts what it is are the few far-sighted men, who, about fifty-five years ago, together transferred to the City a considerable plot of ground in the then Back Bay Fens, to be held as a public trust, for eventual use either as a public

square or for an institute of fine arts. In fulfilment of the condition, when, some years later, representatives of several societies and institutions — the Athenaeum, Harvard College, and the Institute of Technology among them — proposed the foundation of a museum of art, the City offered the restricted plot under the proviso that the



THE FIRST HOME OF THE MUSEUM
Athenaeum Galleries, 1872

Museum should be free to all at least four days a month. From the beginning it was free on Saturdays, and within a year, by the addition of Sunday, the provision was doubly fulfilled.

Now, at its semi-centennial, the Museum is open free to all at all times, excepting on the three chief holidays, national, social, and religious, of every year — July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

The second gift to the Museum likewise gave evidence of an interest in the project outside the circle of its immediate promoters. The fund for the bronze statue of Edward Everett, now standing in the square of that name in Dorchester, had been over-subscribed, and as soon as the Museum received its charter, in 1870, the committee in charge of the memorial turned over the balance, amounting to about \$7500, to the newly appointed Trustees, who have continued to hold it as a permanent fund, employing the income at their discretion.

Among the sponsors for the Museum themselves, the initial effort to obtain money took the form of a popular subscription for the first section of the building planned to be erected in Copley Square on the property just received by deed from the City. A quarter of a million dollars was eventually obtained from more than a thousand givers in



THE FIRST MUSEUM ON COPLEY SQUARE

sums ranging from thirty-five cents to twenty-five thousand dollars. Two years later, one hundred other gifts, amounting to half this sum, were obtained for an addition to the building in sums from one dollar to ten thousand dollars; and nine years afterward for another addition another quarter of a million dollars was subscribed in sums from one dollar to twenty-four thousand.

Meantime the initiative of the Everett trustees had begun to bear its fruits. Considerable gifts of money, together with a bequest, are recorded within a few months after the opening of the first wing of the first building in Copley Square; and during the fifty years that have elapsed since, the number of those who have contributed to the permanent endowment of the Museum by bequest or gift has risen to about one hundred. Only two of the funds so established exceed three hundred thousand dollars: one consisting of property assessed at above that figure in 1912 and worth much more, and one of eight hundred thousand dollars, received in 1898. Among the other funds now held by the Trustees, there is one of five hundred dollars, there

are several of a thousand, many of ten thousand, a number of one hundred thousand, and a few above that figure. Although the roll of testators and givers recalls many of those most active in the Museum during life, it names also many of whom the Museum first heard through their generous farewell. The Museum knew nothing of the charitable intention of the two friends who in 1895 joined in bequeathing funds of fifty thousand dollars each for the purchase of modern pictures; nor was it known that the master of a Boston school had looked forward to making the Museum his heir until in the same year a bequest of ninety-three thousand dollars revealed the fact.

To the group of a hundred benefactors who have endowed the Museum and to the many hundreds who contributed to its first building, there have added themselves in the course of its life many thousands of givers of money for its current maintenance and expansion. Chief among the number are the Subscribers to the Museum, whose annual gifts have risen from \$11,000 in 1889 to over \$50,000 in 1920.

The idea of founding a museum of art in Boston owed its origin to the same public spirit that responded to the suggestion by creating and maintaining the institution. The owners of several collections of art desired to make them more generally available to the public in a central place. Harvard College wished to show its engravings; the Institute of Technology its architectural casts; and the Athenaeum its pictures, sculptures, and other objects. For years the contents of the Museum continued to be mostly the possessions of others, temporarily shown here; and loans from both public and private sources still are and always will be a large element in the exhibits. Several of



JOHN HANCOCK

J. S. Copley (1797-1815)

the Revolutionary portraits shown at the Museum are loans by the city of Boston, transferred from Faneuil Hall where their places are taken by copies. The Institute of Technology eventually withdrew its casts, and Harvard College its engravings for independent exhibition elsewhere. But the collections of the Athenaeum became an indefinite deposit — an earnest of the gifts outright by which the Museum was largely to grow. In 1874, while the first building was still a project, Senator Sumner bequeathed to the Trustees a collection of paintings and engravings; and the first exhibition by the Museum in the Athenaeum building, two years before, had included a number of gifts from many sources, among them an important collection of Egyptian antiquities.

Conspicuous in the Athenaeum deposit are the portraits of George Washington and Martha Washington, by Gilbert Stuart, by which these two bodily presences will best



GEORGE WASHINGTON AND MARTHA WASHINGTON

Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828)

be known for all the future. The Athenaeum itself received them as a gift from an association of gentlemen nearly a hundred years ago, and has deposited them with the Museum, at once for their greater publicity and their greater security. The portraits are unfinished, and a familiar anecdote of the painter tells the reason; but the past history of most of the acquisitions of the Museum is practically unknown to us.

The stories that the exhibits of a great museum could tell are always romantic narratives. All would help us on that difficult journey toward the soul of the past that we must begin in the face of every object in a museum of art if it is to be to us what the artist meant it should be. Never to set out on this journey is never to be wholly human, wide as the world of the present seems and is. It is true that at every turn of the way we are amazed at the inspiration and ingenuity with which man has patiently wrought in the past, only thereafter with vacant mind to take his creations piece from piece or let them fall in ruin.

While the Museum was still young, a group of Bostonians were travellers and students in Japan. The nation was

just then in the throes of its rebirth. The Japanese were in the mood to dispose of any immemorial treasures — pic-



BRONZE "YU"
Chinese, Twelfth Century B.C.

tures, prints, sculptures, arms, ivories, lacquers — as never before and never since; and the travellers were ready to study and acquire them. The Museum was the fortunate depository of the trophies they brought back, and in 1890 an addition to the Copley Square building was erected to house the new department. A collection of the ceramic art of Japan more complete than all other museums put to-

gether can show was a part of the acquisitions and was purchased for the Museum by subscriptions from many friends. The rest were placed on permanent loan and have since become gifts. The impetus thus received has been maintained by noteworthy purchases and accelerated by gifts hardly less important, in large part from another traveller. A fortunate conjunction of opportunity, ability, and generosity has brought together in our Museum a more important collection of Japanese and Chinese art



JAHANGIR

(c. 1615-20)

than exists anywhere else in the world under one roof; and has since provided unexampled facilities for the study of the culture from which the objects sprang. Many of these



MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. JEROME
Fiorenzo di Lorenzo (c. 1475)

acquisitions date from a past that makes the age of like objects of European origin seem youth. One, a sacrificial wine-jar, or "yu," of bronze, now resplendent with a bright green patina, was made to accompany the worship of the faithful in a Chinese temple long before the Greeks had learned to cast in metal. Nevertheless, the symbolism which its makers used in ornamenting it was already consecrated by centuries of tradition. Another, a Buddhist altarpiece, a so-called "Hokke Mandara" (Lotus Paradise), was painted on silk in China while King Alfred was ruling England. An inscription on the back tells of its repair in a Japanese monastery in March, 1143, nearly two centuries before Cimabue created the art of painting for modern Europe. Chiefly by gift also, the Museum has lately become the possessor of a collection of the art of India, now

the most considerable in America. The stories of its past will never be told, nor shall we ever know a thousand others like them. The delicate marble torso of a maiden long a loan and now a gift to the Museum is purely a piece of flotsam in the history of art, a jewel without the suspicion of a setting save as it proves itself from a Greek hand. A little altarpiece with the freshness of immortal youth has just found its way to our galleries from some shrine in Umbria and from the hand of the master of Perugino, himself the master of Raphael. How came it so untouched through five tumultuous centuries? This story, too, will never be told. Pictures, prints, fragments of sculpture, tapestries, fabrics, porcelains, enamels, musical



MADONNA AND CHILD
Francesco di Simone (d. 1493)

instruments, furniture, metal work, cast and wrought — the Museum has been richly dowered with all of these, singly and in collections, during every year of its life, by many givers, often by the same giver many times. All are still eloquent with the messages their makers bade them carry, but most of them silent about the vicissitudes that brought them here. Of an exquisite marble relief of the Madonna and Child from the fifteenth century, lately a gift to the Museum, we know only that at the time the Museum was founded it stood between porphyry columns in the shadows of a private chapel in a princely villa among the Carrara mountains in Italy. The family possessions

were dispersed, and the relief, after half a century in a private collection in Boston, has at length come to the Museum to help make Filippo Lippi, the painter-priest of Florence, and Verrocchio, the teacher of Leonardo da Vinci, real beings to those who can read their influence in the lines of the marble. Another gift brings back pre-



MYCERINUS AND HIS QUEEN
Egyptian, 2800 B.C.

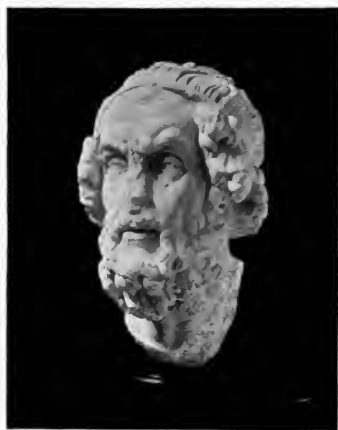
Victorian England. The Museum collection of prints from the *Liber Studiorum* of Turner, lately enlarged by a conspicuous bequest, is now unequalled elsewhere in size and excellence.

Gifts to a museum are the favor of Heaven; and there is a like incalculable quality about two other classes of acquisitions to which our Museum owes its eminence in two other departments. In the main the present Egyp-

tian collections of the Museum consist of the share awarded to it by the Government of Egypt in the results of excavations in that country conducted during a number of years past at the expense of a few citizens of Boston. In the main also it is through the patient skill of one connoisseur who for years was a buyer in the interest of the Museum in Europe that the collection of Greek and Roman art excels in quality all others in America.

Among the Egyptian finds an alabaster head of the pyramid-builder Mycerinus — he whose oracular death sentence is recorded by Herodotus and recalled in Matthew

Arnold's poem—lay broken and concealed for the five millennia since his day at the edge of a path that leads to the Great Pyramids from Cairo. A chance thrust of some traveller's stick at just the right spot in the sand would have unearthed it, and millennia ago it might have been burned in a kiln, walled in a house, or carried off to ornament a Roman villa. But no one disturbed it during all recorded history, until a workman's spade in these last years by good fortune turned it up; and it is now one of the prizes of our Museum. A still greater prize is the double portrait-statue of the same king and his wife, nearly life size, of slate; even to our modern eyes an embodiment of manly dignity and womanly grace. It was found in the same campaign in which the age-long riddle of the Sphinx was finally solved by evidence which proved it the portrait-head of another pyramid-builder, Chephren, hewn from a jutting cliff. With the life



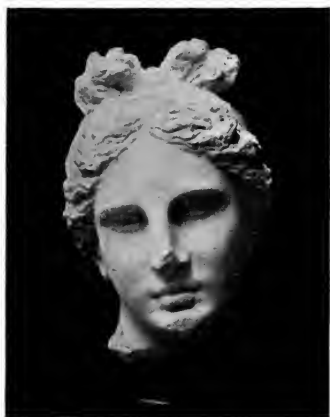
HOMER

Hellenistic Greek

size portrait-statue of that king, of diorite, now preserved in the Cairo Museum, our pair shares the honor of representing the high-water mark of all Egyptian sculpture in the round. It is almost incredible that a prize of such value from far antiquity should exist here in America. The cost of its excavation in money was in comparison insignificant—it is true the dexterity and knowledge that guided the workmen is beyond price.

The chances which have befallen the treasures of our Classical collections are not less remarkable so far as they are discoverable. A portrait-bust of Homer, unique in its

grasp of the Homeric ideal, was one of the gems of the Naples Museum when that collection was still the private cabinet of the Bourbon sovereigns of South Italy. Who would have imagined that another of equal rank as a work of art, perhaps even more powerful in execution, could have been found in Europe in these later years? Yet such a marvel was discovered, acquired, and now stands among our Classical sculptures. Its opposite neighbor in the gallery, the head of a youthful goddess, came to light on the Island of Chios, now happily a Christian possession,



APHRODITE *Greek, Fourth Century B.C.*

but in Byron's time the scene of the massacre by the Turks that inspired the famous painting by Delacroix. The melting beauty of this head seems an anticipation of Rodin; and the admiration which that great sculptor paid the marble when it was shown in London will hang upon it like invisible laurel always. Another head, also from a Praxitelean chisel, and

imagining Aphrodite, possesses a depth of intimate charm that fills one with regret for the lost body it completed. The apex of mystery surrounding the fragments from Greek antiquity possessed by the Museum is reached in the greatest treasure of the whole collection—the three-sided relief acquired ten years ago and called from its form “The Throne.” Only two such triple reliefs exist. The other is a possession of the Italian government, and was discovered a generation or more ago in the grounds of the Ludovisi Palace in Rome. The riddle of their purpose is insoluble as yet, and the meaning of the scenes depicted on

their sides is still a fascinating puzzle of archaeology. The only certain thing about both is their impressive beauty and the characteristics which prove them products of the glorious age of Marathon and Salamis. Perhaps they imaged episodes of the passion burning for the victors in the hearts of deep-bosomed maidens watching their return from islet and promontory. Were it so, how eloquently must the marbles have spoken of the new life before man and maid! Perhaps they were the ends of some high altar, between which sacrifices were heaped; while priests and people passed before them, and through green boughs and over green sward behind them flashed the sapphire and diamond of Mediterranean waves.

Direct purchases without the intervention of a special representative of the Museum have always been the least prolific source of acquisitions by the Trustees. Distance and the delays incident to concerted action are handicaps. The altarpiece of the Convent of St. Anthony from Raphael's hand, not without aid since from restorers, was long offered for sale in Paris at a million francs and nicknamed "*Le Raphael d'un Million.*" When the offer was met in Boston the price advanced in Paris, and years later the picture, now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, was bought for America at a figure reported to be very much higher. Nevertheless, the flow of offers for purchase in any large museum is constant, and to the acceptance of such opportunities the Museum owes many important acquisitions both of single objects and of collections. A list of the titles would be as long and imposing as the roster of the hosts in the second book of the Iliad — and hardly more profitable reading. In all the galleries there are instances of purchases formerly familiar in the Museum as loans. The celebrated "Slave Ship," by J. M. W. Turner, in the possession of Ruskin until he found its tragic import too



LA CURÉE

G. Courbet (1819-1877)

overpowering for daily companionship, was many times shown at the Museum before taking up its permanent place here. "The Quarry," by Courbet, purchased in 1918, had been exhibited in the Museum at intervals for forty years.

Conditions attached to several of the funds bequeathed to the Museum restrict their use to the purchase of modern paintings. The restriction expresses a very general feeling that the Museum should supplement its collections of recondite treasures from remote civilizations by things nearer to ourselves and hence more easily comprehensible. Through the use of these funds the Museum has acquired "The Lion Hunt," by Delacroix, "The Falls of the Rhine," by Turner, "Caritas," by Thayer, "All's Well," by Homer, a collection of water-colors by John S. Sargent, and many other notable pictures. In broad public appeal our Colonial period is also modern, and the recent steps taken by the Museum toward the eventual establishment of a

Department of Colonial Art are responses to the same feeling. Boston is rich in portraits dating from the time when it was a metropolis of colonial life, and the generosity of many friends has already given the Museum an exceptional foundation for such a department. A different duty has been recognized at the Museum toward modern art in the sense of contemporary work, and particularly the work of Boston artists. It is true that works of art are not normally produced for exhibition in a museum. They belong first of all where people daily live and meet, in homes and in public places. Not the patronage of art, but its conservation, is the proper function of museum boards and committees. Nevertheless, the galleries in their charge may offer a means of aiding current production



"ALL'S WELL"

W. Homer (1836-1910)

without dereliction to their primary function. In the final scheme of the present building of the Museum, one of the large courts where casts of sculpture are now shown is to be devoted to temporary exhibitions, a separate basilica of casts housing the reproductions of sculpture. Already the Court is often provisionally installed for this purpose; and the future may bring a constant succession of temporary exhibitions in which current work and living men may have their full opportunity of publicity. The Museum cannot otherwise do its full duty toward the art of the time and the place.



LIBRARY OF THE MUSEUM

A collection of books and photographs for the use primarily of the officers of the Museum and secondarily of any interested persons was from the first seen to be an indispensable part of the Museum equipment. In 1875, a year before the first building was opened, a Library was assured to the future Museum by the gift of a thousand dollars. The Library now covers all the branches of art represented in the Museum collections and contains fifty thousand volumes whose illustrations are supplemented by an equally comprehensive collection of fifty thousand photographs. The books include twenty thousand volumes in Chinese and Japanese upon the art and history of China and Japan; and the photographs a large section on Italian art received by gift.

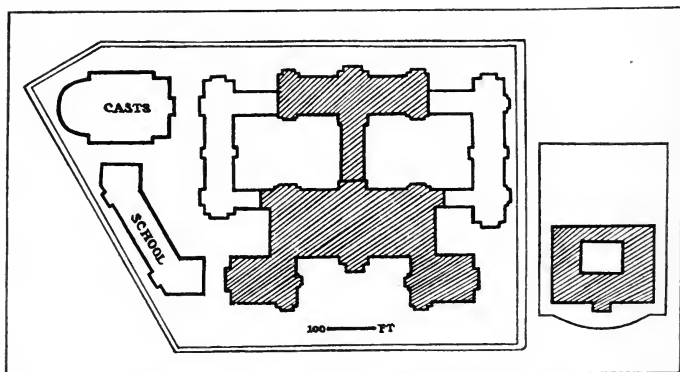
What has the Museum done with the great endowment and the immense collections which many happy fortunes of the past half-century have placed in its keeping in trust for the community? In part the collections are the outcome of the endowment. Of the funds received by the Mu-

seum, about a million and a quarter dollars have been given and are or have been used, either principal or income, for acquisitions of works of art. A number of other funds have been placed in the hands of the Trustees without any restrictions as to the use either of principal or income. After long consideration the Trustees many years ago adopted the policy of devoting a portion of the principal of such funds to acquisitions of the highest quality unobtainable by the slow process of accumulating income. Tangible and permanent evidence of the use of the Museum endowment for acquisitions appears in many galleries. Every object thus acquired bears the name of the giver of the fund used. Every one is a permanent memorial associating the liberality of the past with the pleasure and profit of the present and future.

The endowment has also made possible the housing and care of the collections in an adequate building on spacious grounds, their safe and handsome installation for preservation and exhibition; and their exposition to all comers by the written or spoken word of the men of special knowledge called to add to and take charge of them.

A total of over six hundred thousand dollars was obtained by popular subscription for the first building of the Museum on Copley Square; and when, in 1899, this location had become impossible for a museum on account of the obstruction of light and the risk of fire from nearby buildings, and the smoke, dust and vibration from nearby traffic, the lot of ground originally given for a museum by a few associates acting through the City government was sold for a sum which provided more than half of the three million dollars expended for the new location and building.

Building



THE PRESENT BUILDING, AND PROPOSED ADDITIONS, COMPARED IN SIZE WITH THE
COPLEY SQUARE MUSEUM

By a misapprehension the Copley Square property is often referred to as the single gift received by the Museum from other than a private source. In fact, it was a private gift like every other received by the Museum. The original donors specified that the lot should eventually be held either by the public as a square, or by an institute of fine arts as the site of its building. The City's part consisted in deciding the alternative in favor of the museum proposed a few years later; and in exempting the institution from taxation in view of its public usefulness.

The present building of the Museum, opened in 1909, represented an epoch-making advance in museum architecture. During six years the Trustees had devoted to the problem of the removal of the Museum all four methods known to inquiry: experience gained during a generation at the old building; experiment in a temporary structure erected on the future site; observation by a Commission which visited a hundred museums in Europe; and study devoted to the existing literature of museum theory and practice. These inquiries, of which the literary fruit was embodied in four volumes entitled "Communications to the Trustees," and the concrete outcome was the present

building, have influenced the plan of every museum erected in the decade since. They are at this moment effective in many projects not yet realized both at home and abroad. The abandonment of small courts and the increased use of windows in the interest of better lighting, the structural separation of the art of different civilizations, the division of space between rooms for study and rooms for exhibition, the provision of agreeable opportunities for rest and recreation — all of these demands are sought to be met in this building and none will be neglected in the museums of the future. The Trustees prepared their plans fully conscious of the possibility that they might have their greatest value as guides to others. The principles here embodied have before them many possible applications. Already in our own building, when the munificent gift of a million dollars brought the Museum its present Galleries of Paintings, the experience of the temporary picture galleries resulted in monitor skylights for the new ones, and the admirable illumination of the Courts of Casts led to lighting the Tapestry Gallery by clerestory windows.

The care that is devoted at the Museum to the rich accumulation of objects of art of which it has in a half century become the abiding place is but partially manifest in the galleries of exhibition. Of some of the collections, notably the collections of European prints and those of Oriental art, only a very small portion can be shown simultaneously. Neither European prints nor Oriental objects are made to be exhibited by museums-full. Herein the habits of the East and West are at one, and demand the most careful provisions for the safe-keeping and accessibility of the objects not exhibited. For it is the ambition of the Museum to be able to show any of its con-

Installation



THE TAPESTRY GALLERY

tents at any time to any properly qualified visitor. The storage of pictures makes an equally serious demand upon the space and the facilities of the Museum. All of the collections consist of more or less perishable things; even the bronzes have their diseases; and moth, rust and mildew, the fading of tints, and the decay of materials are enemies against which no precautions can be too elaborate or complete. A museum has no limit of life, and its contents grow in value as they grow in age. The duty of their preservation is an anxious responsibility for all of those in charge of them.

The exhibition of the collections presents a new series of problems. A museum may be compared to a patchwork quilt, but only in the varied origin and fragmentary nature of its contents. For to make a pattern of its patches is the last thing a museum should attempt. So to do is to ask of the curator's brain an artistic combination sure to lack

sympathy with the intention of the makers of the objects combined. To show them as the fragments that they are, to abjure the interior-decorative purpose without obtaining combinations so awkward as to chill the mood in which the fragments are approached is the great problem of museum installation. It is not quickly to be solved. Many of the galleries of the Museum are crude and unhomelike still. Time must elapse ere they can be a proper setting for their contents. There are great possibilities in all the exhibition spaces; and in the Rotunda with its new decorations the Museum will have a reception hall worthy of the royal presences to which it leads.

True to the traditions of the city as the focus of educational effort in the United States, the Museum in Boston was the first to engage men of special training to publish its collections. It is pleasant to recall the little brochure (*“Companion to the Catalogue”*) in which, by the sprightly recital of an imaginary journey through the galleries, the Museum was recommended to its visitors within a year after the first building was opened. The publications appearing thereafter during many years reflect the dependence of the Museum upon temporary loans for its exhibits. Later they came to include contributions of permanent value to the history of engraving and to classical archaeology; and at length a Catalogue of Japanese Pottery whose union of genius with patience has carried the name of the Museum all over the world. The publications which have since appeared under the auspices of the Museum form a notable series well worthy of the literary and scientific reputation of Boston. They include not only carefully studied lists of our own possessions, but monographs, historical or theoretical in content, related to

Exposition



THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY ROOM

them. At the moment there await publication several volumes, among them an elaborate inquiry into Greek design, a detailed investigation of a single work of art, and critical catalogues of groups of others. For seventeen years the publications of the Museum have included an illustrated bi-monthly Bulletin recording its activities. It has been aimed not to create a new journal of art, but to maintain an adequate chronicle of events at one museum. In the immense current plethora of printed matter needing to be consulted by interested persons, it has been felt as a duty to consider carefully just the kind of information such a Bulletin could give, and to give it in the fewest possible words. The "Handbook of the Museum" was first published fourteen years ago on a novel plan as an illustrated anthology of the Museum, a companion and souvenir of Museum visits. A foreign critic wrote: "A better example of a museum handbook . . . could hardly be imagined by the most exacting mind." The book is in its thirteenth edi-



THE JAPANESE COURT

tion, and about 2500 copies a year are called for by Museum visitors. For several years and until the War, the Museum published also "The Print Collector's Quarterly," the only periodical devoted to awakening and gratifying the taste for fine engraving among English-speaking people. The Quarterly in effect extended to the whole art of engraving the work of the Museum in the exposition of its own collections. For the narrower purpose, a new type of publication was devised at the Museum ten years ago. A "Gallery Book" is a pamphlet, typewritten and manifolded, aiming to aid the visitor in comprehending every object shown in the gallery where it is installed as a lending copy. The Gallery Books are issued in increasing numbers every year under the supervision of the heads of the departments concerned.

The Museum was the first also to offer visitors oral comment upon the collections. In 1906 it was proposed that members of the Staff be commissioned to explain the exhibits to visitors in the galleries; and the old English ad-



THE PRINT STUDY

jective "Docent" was applied to the new form of service. The plan was carried out in the following year and has been widely adopted elsewhere in this country and abroad, either as an occasional duty of a whole museum personnel with invited aids, according to the method adopted here, or as an office apart. Within a few months the Louvre in Paris has begun to offer its visitors information about the collections through the guardians in the galleries who are given special instruction to that end. At our own Museum, during the past thirteen years, the method has grown into a developed system adapted to the needs of every age and condition.

Within six months after the opening of the first building in Copley Square, an organization of men and women asked and obtained permission from the Trustees to carry on classes for technical instruction in various branches of fine art in the Museum building under the name of the School of Drawing and Painting. The instruction has been maintained continuously to this day; the School of Drawing and Painting becoming in 1908 by announcement of the Trustees the School of the Museum. None of the funds

of the Museum are devoted to the expenses of the School; but a standing offer by the Trustees to receive and administer any sums offered for its purposes has led to several contributions toward a permanent endowment. The School gives instruction of high character in painting, modelling and design, in part by lectures in the Museum. The School is proud that its Roll of Honor in the Great War bears forty stars.

The practice of appointing men of special training in charge of branches of the collections of the Museum is now a generation old. In 1885, when the first appointments were made, the organization of museums of art in America was still in embryo. From the first the phrase “charge of the collections” was understood to combine the care, exhibition, study, and exposition of the existing possessions of the Museum with advice regarding their increase. The establishment of separate departments has awaited the selection of men fitted for these duties. Two were appointed in 1885, in charge respectively of engravings and classical archaeology; and the collections are now completely organized under seven curators or keepers.

Staff



THE SHOWER AT THE SHRINE

(Kiyonaga 1752-1815)



KUAN-YIN

Chinese, Twelfth Century

The divisions recognized are the Departments of Prints (1887), Classical Art (1887), Chinese and Japanese Art (1890), Egyptian Art (1902), Paintings (1902), Western Art (1910), and the Section of Indian Art (1917). About forty persons have at different times been in charge of one or another department. The list includes six who have been directors of other museums or schools of art (one in Japan); six who have been professors at neighboring colleges; two who are now curators at other museums (one at the Louvre); two who before their selection had won international reputations as pioneer students each in his chosen branch; and a number whose right to the title expert is attested by elaborate investigations chiefly published elsewhere.

The demands of the modern museum upon its curators may already be said to have created a new profession. Their functions both as advisers to the Museum regarding

acquisitions and expositors to the public of the works acquired develop the qualities of the critic conceived as interpreter. Of these functions the second would persist even were our museums to cease to grow. The duty of interpreting their existing riches to successive generations in the new light that progressive inquiry could throw across the ever-widening gap between object and visitor is one which time makes only more exacting. In due course the museum of art will be recognized as the natural home of the interpreter of painting and sculpture, as the theatre and the concert hall is the habitat of the critic of drama and music. In this advance our Museum has led the way in America.

A careful method of choosing the responsible owners-in-trust of the Museum property was laid down in the Act of their incorporation. The Board of Trustees is not a close corporation. The public directly or indirectly chooses four of their number — the Mayor of Boston, the President of the Trustees of the Public Library, the Commissioner of Education, and the Superintendent of Schools. Established institutions in Boston choose ten, Harvard College, the Athenaeum, and the Institute of Technology each choosing three annually, and the Lowell Institute sending its Trustee. Sixteen other Trustees are named in the charter, and their successors are chosen by the whole Board. The Trustees appointed or elected have contained a large representation of the professional interests of the community in the Museum. They have included the successive Presidents of Harvard and of the Institute of Technology, a Librarian and Secretary of the Athenaeum, a Treasurer of Harvard, a President of Trinity College, five professors of Harvard, two professors from the

Corporation



THE SEVERN AND THE WYE

Mezzotint. J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851)

Institute of Technology, a Director of the Fogg Art Museum, successive Chairmen and Secretaries of the Museum School Council, two instructors at the School, and three of the administrative heads of the Museum itself.

Fifteen years ago the Trustees adopted the practice of calling to their aid in an advisory capacity bodies of citizens named as visitors to one or another branch of the Museum organization. The Visiting Committees form no part of the administrative machinery of the Museum. They are its circle of intimate friends appointed to learn more definitely the needs of the Museum and the opportunities it offers, in order to share their knowledge with the rest of the public which the Museum exists to serve and from which it derives its support. The Visiting Committees include both men and women. Their numbers are not limited nor is the choice of their membership restricted. Through such an advisory body as the Visiting Committee on the Administration of the Museum, the Trustees have the opportunity of obtaining a sympathetic and well-informed view of any question relating to its future from a body widely representing the community. With the Subscribers to the

annual expenses of the Museum, a much larger body and of still older date, the Visiting Committees are the existing representatives of the tens of thousands of citizens to whose unfailing interest and inexhaustible generosity the Museum has owed its life and growth.

The gifts of individuals have endowed the Museum with the essentials of a great artistic foundation: grounds ideal in situation and adequate for an indefinite future; a building sufficient for the present and planned for all reasonable expansion; collections which insure to

Needs

Boston a permanent place among the foremost art treasures of the world; and an organization of corporate and professional control equal to the active and successful management of the institution. Nevertheless, a vital lack remains. The means do not yet exist with which to keep adequately in motion this great engine of culture. The Museum has not the money for the proper preservation, exhibition, and publication of its collections and their interpretation to the people. With close and even damaging economies its annual expenses are now nearly two hundred thousand dollars; and the income of the Museum from all sources available to meet them is but about one hundred and sixty thousand dollars; leaving a debit balance of about forty thousand dollars to be made up annually from principal. Similar deficiencies in the budgets of other museums may be and are met by municipal appropriations. The Metropolitan Museum of New York with its six hundred thousand dollars of annual expenses will obtain half of this great sum from the City of New York in the year 1920. The buildings and the site of the Museum are likewise provided by the City. In 1919 the Art Institute of Chicago with three hundred and fifty thousand dollars

of disbursements for maintenance obtained one hundred and fifty thousand from the City. Our Museum has never received a penny of public money; and the new Constitution of the State has just closed that source for the future. A fund of two million dollars of which the income may be used for current expenses is the immediate and imperative need of the Museum; and if it is to advance with our community as other museums advance with theirs, it should look forward to an eventual maintenance endowment much larger in amount. Those engaged in the service of the Museum unite in the confident belief that the means required to make and keep its growing advantages available to the whole community will now and later be abundantly provided.

BENJAMIN IVES GILMAN,

Secretary of the Museum.

DECEMBER, 1920.



THE COMPLETED MUSEUM

MUSEUM ANNALS

- 1869 Bequest to the Athenaeum from Col. T. B. Lawrence of a collection of arms and armor. Offer from Mrs. Lawrence of \$25,000 toward the foundation of a new gallery.
- 1870 *February 4th.* The Museum incorporated under the name of the Trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts "for the purpose of erecting a museum for the preservation and exhibition of works of art, of making, maintaining, and exhibiting collections of such works and of instruction in the Fine Arts."
- March 17th.* Martin Brimmer, first President.
Henry P. Kidder, first Treasurer.
J. Elliot Cabot, first Secretary.
- May 26th.* Award to the Museum by the city of land on Copley Square lately received by gift from the Boston Water Power Company in trust to be used either for an Institute of Fine Arts or for an open square. The award specifies that the Museum is to be open free to the public at least four days a month.
- 1872 Exhibition of the collections of the Museum, given, lent, and purchased, in two of the picture galleries of the Athenaeum.
- Destruction of the Lawrence armor in the Great Fire.
- 1876 *January 21st.* The Museum placed under the general charge and management of a Curator (from 1887 Director).
- Charles C. Perkins, Honorary Director.
Charles G. Loring, Curator.
- April 20th.* Henry Richards, second Secretary.
- July 4th.* West half of the Copley Square wing of the proposed Museum building opened to the public.
Saturday established as a free day.

- 1877 *January 2nd.* Permission given to the School of Drawing and Painting to hold classes in the Museum building.
January 18th. Museum to be open on Sundays as a free day.
- 1878 *July 18th.* Edward H. Greenleaf, third Secretary.
- 1879 *July 1st.* Completed wing on Copley Square opened to the public.
July 17th. Library of the Museum established.
- 1882 First loan by the Museum; a painting exhibited at the Royal Academy, London.
May. Photographs of objects in the Museum first sold at the entrance.
- 1885 Sylvester R. Koehler, Curator of Gray engravings.
Edward Robinson, Curator in classical archaeology.
- 1886 *March 20th.* John L. Gardner, second Treasurer.
- 1887 *February 1st.* Print Department established.
Catalogue of Rembrandt etchings published; the first special catalogue issued by the Museum.
March 1st. Department of Classical Antiquities established.
Use of the department rooms offered to students.
April 21st. Office of Honorary Director discontinued.
Title of Curator of the Museum changed to Director.
Sylvester R. Koehler, first Curator of the Print Department.
Edward Robinson, first Curator of Classical Antiquities.
- 1890 *March 15th.* Department of Japanese Art established.
Ernest F. Fenollosa, first Curator of the Department.
March 18th. Completed building on Copley Square opened to the public. A corridor, and structures connecting it with the Copley Square wing and enclosing a court, were the final additions to the building.

- 1892 *March 1st.* Edward S. Morse, first Keeper of Japanese Pottery.
First lecture course at the Museum; "The Photo-mechanical Processes."
- 1894 *January 18th.* Benjamin Ives Gilman, fourth Secretary.
- 1895 First issue of free tickets to a teacher and pupils.
- 1896 *February 13th.* William Endicott, Jr., second President.
First experimental test of gallery guidance. From December 29, 1895 to April 26, 1896, representatives of the Twentieth Century Club were present on Sunday afternoons in the Galleries of Casts, by permission of the Trustees and under the supervision of the Secretary to explain the exhibits to visitors.
- 1897 Loans by the Museum for purposes of instruction begun by an exhibit sent to the Lowell Textile School.
- 1898 *December 19th.* Charles Lowell, third Treasurer.
The Textile Study opened to students.
- 1899 *October 19th.* Walter M. Cabot, second Curator of the Department of Japanese Art.
December 1st. The present site of the Museum on Huntington Avenue and the Fenway purchased.
- 1900 First loan of photographs from the Museum collection.
- 1901 *January 19th.* Samuel D. Warren, third President.
October 17th. The School of Drawing and Painting recognized and adopted by the Trustees under the title of "The School of the Museum of Fine Arts."
- 1902 *April 22nd.* Land and building on Copley Square sold.
May 27th. Edward Robinson, second Director.
August 1st. Keepership of Paintings established. John Briggs Potter, first Keeper.
September 15th. Department of Egyptian Art established.

October 16th. Albert M. Lythgoe, first Curator of the Department.

Photograph Study opened to the public.

1903 *March.* First number of the Museum Bulletin issued.

April 28th. Title of the Japanese Department changed to the Department of Chinese and Japanese Art.

July 16th. Paul Chalfin, third Curator of the Department.

1904 *January 2nd.* Departure of the Museum Commission for three months' study of European museums.

January 21st. Title of Secretary changed to Secretary of the Museum.

Museum lectures under the auspices of Simmons College and others begun.

October 20th. Emil H. Richter, second Curator of the Print Department.

1905 *July 20th.* Inauguration of the Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian Expedition.

First loan of lantern slides of Museum objects.

1906 *January 12th.* Okakura-Kakuzo, fourth Curator of the Department of Chinese and Japanese Art.

January 18th. J. Randolph Coolidge, Jr., first Temporary Director.

Visiting Committees established.

March. Lecture room opened. Class room for the use of visiting instructors and others opened.

May 23rd. First meeting of a Committee to promote the Utilization of the Museum by Colleges and Schools.

June. Bulletin announcement of the proposed appointment of Docents to explain exhibits to visitors in the galleries.

First edition of the Handbook of the Museum issued.

July 19th. Francis L. Higginson, fourth Treasurer.

Docents

- 1907 Postal cards of objects in the Museum first put on sale.
January 17th. Gardiner Martin Lane, fourth President.
Benjamin Ives Gilman, second Temporary Director.
April 1st. Garrick Mallory Borden, first Docent at the Museum.
April 11th. Ground broken for the present building on Huntington Avenue and the Fenway.
May 24th. Arthur Fairbanks, third Director and second Curator of the Department of Classical Art.
- 1908 *January.* Advisory Committee on Education established to take the place of the Committee on Utilization. First series of Thursday Conferences in the galleries.
January to March, first series of Sunday talks, provided for by friends of the Museum.
- 1909 *May 2nd.* Copley Square building closed.
November 15th. Huntington Avenue building opened to the public.
Collegiate Courses for teachers and others arranged; Teachers' Lists of objects in the Museum issued; Pupils' Sheets of illustrations from Museum objects offered to the schools; Collection of framed photographs lent to the schools.
- 1910 *April 21st.* Frank Gair Macomber, Honorary Curator of Western Art.
July 21st. George A. Reisner, second Curator of the Department of Egyptian Art.
Collegiate Courses taken over by the Committee of University Extension Courses in Boston.
- 1911 *May 11th.* Jean Guiffrey, first Curator of Paintings.
May. Gift of the Robert Dawson Evans Galleries of Paintings.
- 1912 *April 9th.* Lacey D. Caskey, third Curator of the Department of Classical Art.
October 17th. FitzRoy Carrington, third Curator of the Print Department.

- 1913 *January 16th.* Huger Elliott, first Supervisor of Educational Work.
First Gallery Books for the use of visitors installed in connection with exhibits of the Chinese and Japanese Department.
First illustrated lectures at the Museum for pupils of the School.
- 1914 *October 30th.* Morris Gray, fifth President.
First Saturday afternoon Picture and Story hours for the children of the public schools.
- 1915 *February 3rd.* Robert Dawson Evans Galleries for Paintings opened to the public.
- 1916 *January 20th.* John E. Lodge, fifth Curator of the Department of Chinese and Japanese Art.
- 1917 *March 29th.* William Endicott, fifth Treasurer.
April 26th. Keepership of Indian Art established.
Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, first Keeper.
June 14th. William C. Endicott, sixth Treasurer.
- 1918 *January 17th.* The Museum opened free to all.
- 1919 *July 17th.* Malcolm Storer, Honorary Keeper of Coins.
- 1920 *April 13th.* First concert in the Museum building.

OFFICERS OF THE MUSEUM, 1920

MORRIS GRAY, President
WILLIAM CROWNINSHIELD ENDICOTT, Treasurer
ARTHUR FAIRBANKS, Director
BENJAMIN IVES GILMAN, Secretary of the Museum
JOHN ELIOT THAYER, Jr., Assistant Treasurer

DEPARTMENTS OF THE MUSEUM, 1920

Prints

FITZROY CARRINGTON, Curator
HENRY PRESTON ROSSITER, Assistant Curator

Classical Art

LACEY DAVIS CASKEY, Curator

Chinese and Japanese Art

JOHN ELLERTON LODGE, Curator
KOJIRO TOMITA, Assistant Curator
EDWARD SYLVESTER MORSE, Keeper of Japanese Pottery
FRANCIS STEWART KERSHAW, Keeper in the Department

Section of Indian Art

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY, Keeper

Egyptian Art

GEORGE ANDREW REISNER, Curator
DOWS DUNHAM, Assistant Curator

Paintings

JOHN BRIGGS POTTER, Keeper

Western Art

EDWIN JAMES HIPKISS, Keeper in the Department
MRS. CHARLES WENDELL TOWNSEND, Adviser in Textiles
MISS GERTRUDE TOWNSEND, Assistant in Charge of Textiles

Library

ROSCOE LORING DUNN, Assistant in Charge
MISS MARTHA FENDERSON, Assistant Librarian
MISS FRANCES ELLIS TURNER, Assistant in Charge of Photographs

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